



**Northeastern Retail
Lumber Association**

585 North Greenbush Rd
Rensselaer, NY 12144

Phone: (518) 286-1010
Toll Free: (800) 292-6752
Fax: (518) 286-1755
www.nrla.org

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Caribou, ME

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Founded in 1894

Mission: to unite, lead,
represent, train and provide
a forum for the successful
evolution of the independent
lumber and building material
dealers in the Northeast.

Affiliated with



January 29, 2004

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: WT 02-55 (*Public Safety Interference in the 800 MHz Band*)

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing on behalf of the Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA) to call the Commission's attention to public safety radio interference – a growing problem affecting emergency services personnel and those who rely on the services they provide.

NRLA represents small business retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers and suppliers of lumber, lumber products and building materials. Their membership collectively contributes approximately \$6.2 billion in net sales annually to the state's economy and employs more than 31,000 New Yorkers.

The members of the NRLA support a proposal known as The Consensus Plan to resolve this problem of radio signal interference. The Consensus Plan would virtually eliminate interference to public safety communications systems and provide wireless systems operating at 800 MHz by realigning the current jumbled licensing of 800 MHz blocks. The plan requires no federal, state or local funding to implement.

The Consensus Plan is being supported by public safety groups, including fire, medical, police and emergency services organizations. The NRLA works closely with fire and emergency services groups and the New York State Department of State, who regulate the building code and fire safety matters. As retail lumber store owners and operators, some of whom are also volunteer fire fighters, the NRLA members are also concerned that in the event of a lumber yard fire, first responders would be at risk because their public radio communications are vulnerable to interference from cellular phones.

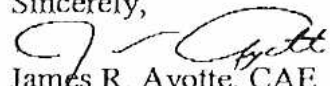
Our members support The Consensus Plan because it is the only plan before the FCC that would both proactively solve the problem of interference and provide additional spectrum for future public safety communications needs. The Commission has had two years

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to study the issue. We urge you to make a swift decision on this very critical matter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


James R. Ayotte, CAE
President

CC: Commissioner Abernathy
Commissioner Adelstein
Commissioner Copps
Commissioner Martin